



USAID
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AFGHANISTAN

SNAPSHOT

"I returned to work the next day."

Laborers like Fadhil Ahmad are largely undeterred by high-risk security environments



Workers at the Sharana Hospital rehabilitation project in Paktika Province.

USAID/CDP/CADG

Afghan nationals regularly face risks while working on international development projects in Afghanistan. USAID often works with employees to manage the risks that they face.

Fadhil Ahmad tucked a pair of glasses into his pocket when he saw six men blocking the road that led to his house. Sitting by the side of a local graveyard, they watched him approach and then ambled across the road, blocking Fadhil's way, while holding their weapons at ready. Fadhil knew that they were not going to let him pass.

When Fadhil slowed down and stopped, one of the men accused him of working for a USAID project in southern Paktika province. "We have tracked you," the man said. "You are a supervisor at the project and you have just returned today from registration." With that, they hit him in the back of the head with the butt of an automatic rifle and beat him after he dropped to the ground. Fadhil recalled, "I lost consciousness. When I awoke, some villagers were surrounding me and helped me up. I had trouble walking but I made it back to my house."

Fadhil had lacerations on his body from the beating. The back of his head was swollen from the impact of the gun-stock. That night, his extended family convened at his house and begged him to stop working on the project. He said, "There are 43 people in my extended family. They were very scared, so I compromised with them. I would try to find a different project. These USAID projects mean too much to give up entirely."

Sixteen hours after his beating, Fadhil met with the Paktika provincial managers for Central Asia Development Group, USAID's implementing partner in the region. The managers asked him about his family's security concerns, and then agreed to move him to a Sharana Hospital repair project. Fadhil considers the Sharana location to be safer because the insurgents who had beaten him were not local. Active community support and improved security in the Sharana district have suppressed insurgent interference with the hospital repairs.

Fadhil says that he would have worked on the Sharana project regardless of the risk. "The Sharana Hospital repair project has been very good for me, and I now have two cousins working on the site. USAID has provided critical help to my family. I cannot abandon these projects because of threats."